

# State Representatives Frank Chopp & Jamie Pedersen

## 2007 SESSION REVIEW



June 2007

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Dear neighbors,

We started this past legislative session with an aggressive, progressive agenda, including covering all kids with health care, making dramatic investments in education, funding the clean up of Puget Sound, and providing security for *all* families.

As you will see in this session review, we can proudly report that we have accomplished these goals, and many more:

- Finally giving voters the opportunity to remove the super majority requirement that makes it harder to pass school levies;
- Approving important domestic partnership rights for same-sex and elderly couples;
- Continuing our commitment to protecting the vulnerable in our state through mental health funding, the low income housing trust fund, and community health care;
- Making record investments in public school construction and transportation projects; and
- Expanding the successful Opportunity Grants program so deserving students can gain job skills or a college degree.

We met regularly and worked closely with Sen. Ed Murray on the issues that affect our district.

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, or about any legislative issue, please don't hesitate to call our offices. We count on your input!

It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

*Frank Chopp Jamie Pedersen*

**43rd Legislative District**

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## State Representative Frank Chopp

In my role as Speaker, I work hard to set an agenda for the House of Representatives that reflects the best of what unites us as a state. From Wallingford to Walla Walla, I know all of us share a passion for quality schools, affordable health care, and a robust economy.

These shared values form the bedrock of what we accomplished this session.

# 2007 SESSION

## Our Education 5-Point Plan

Education is our top priority. This session we approached the system as a whole, from early learning all the way to college, and developed a Five-Point Plan to strengthen Washington's education standards. The bills we delivered to the Governor will:



- Improve access to quality early learning, including focusing on parent, family and caregiver supports, and developing a voluntary quality rating and improvement system for child care providers.



- Fund basic education, including special education, school bus service, technology upgrades and full-day kindergarten.
- Fully fund I-732 to lower class sizes, and I-728 to raise teacher salaries.
- Help students succeed and graduate on time through programs such as dropout prevention and after-school math.
- Expand the Opportunity Grants program and increase financial aid for higher education.



## Health Care for Kids

In 2005 I challenged the Governor and Legislature to cover all Washington children by 2010. I'm proud to report that we are meeting our goal so that all Washington children will be guaranteed quality health care regardless of income or family circumstance. Almost as importantly, every child will have a "medical home" – a medical professional or clinic that knows the child's medical needs and family history. As a result, our program is considered one of the best in the nation.



## Mental Health

We know that mental illnesses can be as debilitating as many physical illnesses. Last year, we passed a law that provided mental health parity in insurance plans that covered fifty or more employees. This session we built on that, expanding mental health parity to smaller insurance plans and individuals.

We also took the first critical steps toward developing a mental health system for children that is evidence-based and family-centered.



## Opportunity Grants

The idea is simple: provide low-income community college students with scholarships so they never have to abandon the goal of a higher wage job in the future in order to meet basic financial needs today. This is a program I have personally advocated as part of an ongoing effort to make our education system work for all students.

It also is a win for our state's employers, as more students gain the skills needed for today's high-demand jobs.



## Housing Trust Fund

More than 20,000 people are homeless in Washington, including at least 3000 children – and many more families are just one paycheck away from losing their homes.

We increased funding for the Housing Trust Fund by 30% this biennium helping to meet housing needs with low-income rental and homeownership opportunities, farm worker housing, and special housing for people with mental illness, developmental disabilities, or victims of domestic violence.

## 520 and Viaduct

Our district is home to two of the most high profile and important transportation projects in the state: the 520 Bridge and Alaskan Way Viaduct. A lot of work was done this session to make sure these projects move forward on time, within a budget, and with respect for the environment and our neighborhoods.



# ON REVIEW

## Viaduct:

Governor Gregoire has established a process to resolve the disputed central waterfront portion of the project, while moving forward on both ends of the Viaduct with transit, safety, and capacity upgrades.



## SR 520 Bridge:

The Governor will sign legislation sponsored by 43rd District Sen. Ed Murray to engage in a mediated process – assuring that community concerns are made public and incorporated into the final design and alignment of the project.

## Economic Growth

We have the nation's highest rate for new business start-ups and we consistently rank among the top 5 states in the nation for small businesses.

In 2005, Washington firms with less than 500 employees totaled 194,963. And self-employed women totaled 144,059, an increase of 9.3 percent from 2004, representing 38.6 percent of self-employed persons in the state.

To continue helping businesses grow, this session we:

- Increased the amount of low interest rate loans available through the Linked Deposit program for minority-owned and women-owned business.
- Increased significantly our investments in infrastructure projects including school construction, transportation, housing and community facilities.



## State Representative Jamie Pedersen

This was my first session in the Legislature and I'm proud of both my accomplishments and those of the House Democratic Caucus. I believe we delivered solid results that will enhance the lives of all Washingtonians.



## Domestic Violence: no contact means NO contact

I sponsored a bill that makes it a crime to violate a no-contact order. Previously, unless there was an overt threat over the phone or through e-mail, prosecutors were powerless to protect the victims of domestic violence from these contacts. Instead, victims had to get to a judge to decide the abuser was in contempt of court. My bill will allow police and prosecutors to enforce the orders directly.



*Rep. Pedersen at the signing of the Domestic Partnership legislation with Gov. Gregoire and his partner, Eric.*



## Youth in Foster Care

We passed a package of bills designed to provide assistance to one of the most vulnerable groups in Washington – youth in foster care. These bills will:

- Provide housing vouchers and case management services for former foster youth aged 18-23, helping to keep this vulnerable population from becoming homeless. I was the prime sponsor of this bill.
- Extend Medicaid health coverage to foster children until age 21.
- Provide assistance to caregivers before returning a child home and requiring background checks on all adults in such a home.
- Require that foster parents and caregivers seeking to adopt a child be notified that they have a right to be heard in court.

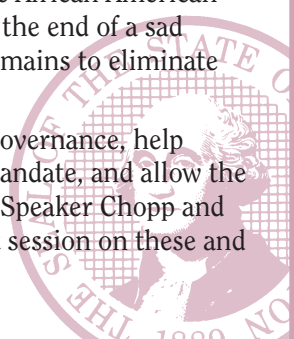


## Juneteenth

I sponsored a bill that establishes June 19th as a day of remembrance for the day slavery finally ended in the United States. On June 19, 1865, General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas and informed the slaves of their freedom two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

Juneteenth has been celebrated since the 1860s in the African American community. It is a great day for all of us to celebrate the end of a sad chapter of our history and recognize the work that remains to eliminate racism in our society.

I also prime-sponsored bills that improve corporate governance, help nightclubs to comply with the automatic sprinkler mandate, and allow the health care authority to issue grants. I'm grateful to Speaker Chopp and Sen. Ed Murray for their active mentoring in my first session on these and many other issues.





# State Representatives Frank Chopp & Jamie Pedersen

## 2007 SESSION REVIEW

### Environment

People in Washington are passionate about safeguarding the environment, preserving our state's natural beauty and fighting against the global threat of climate change. The 2007 Legislature took important steps to protect the environment and our quality of life by passing bills that:

- Double the state's investment in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to \$100 million.
- Create the Puget Sound Partnership to clean up and restore the environmental health of Puget Sound by the year 2020.
- Reduce our dependence on fossil fuels by establishing incentives to help businesses, consumers, and farmers gain greater access to affordable clean fuels, and to produce those clean fuels here in our state.
- Prohibit the manufacture, sale, or distribution of products containing polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).
- Limit greenhouse gas emissions from electricity production.



### Domestic Partnership Registry

In one of the most historic moments of this session, Governor Gregoire signed the Domestic Partnership Registry bill into law. We worked hard through the whole session with our seatmate, Sen. Ed Murray, the bill's prime sponsor, to get this legislation passed. On July 23, 2007, same-sex couples will finally gain some basic legal protections for their families, such as hospital visitation, and the right to inherit property when one's partner dies without a will. Opposite-sex seniors who are not married will also be able to register their relationships with the Secretary of State's office.



marriage equality.

Now it's time to begin engaging the community to talk about how we will expand the registry next year as we work toward achieving

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